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Enhancing Student Motivation

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Keeping Students on Track: Promoting Motivation & Engagement by Meeting Needs

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Overview

1. Defining Motivation and Engagement
2. Understanding What Affects Students' Motivation and Engagement
 - Three basic needs
 - Achievement goals
 - Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
3. Tools for Improving Motivation
4. Practice Scenarios

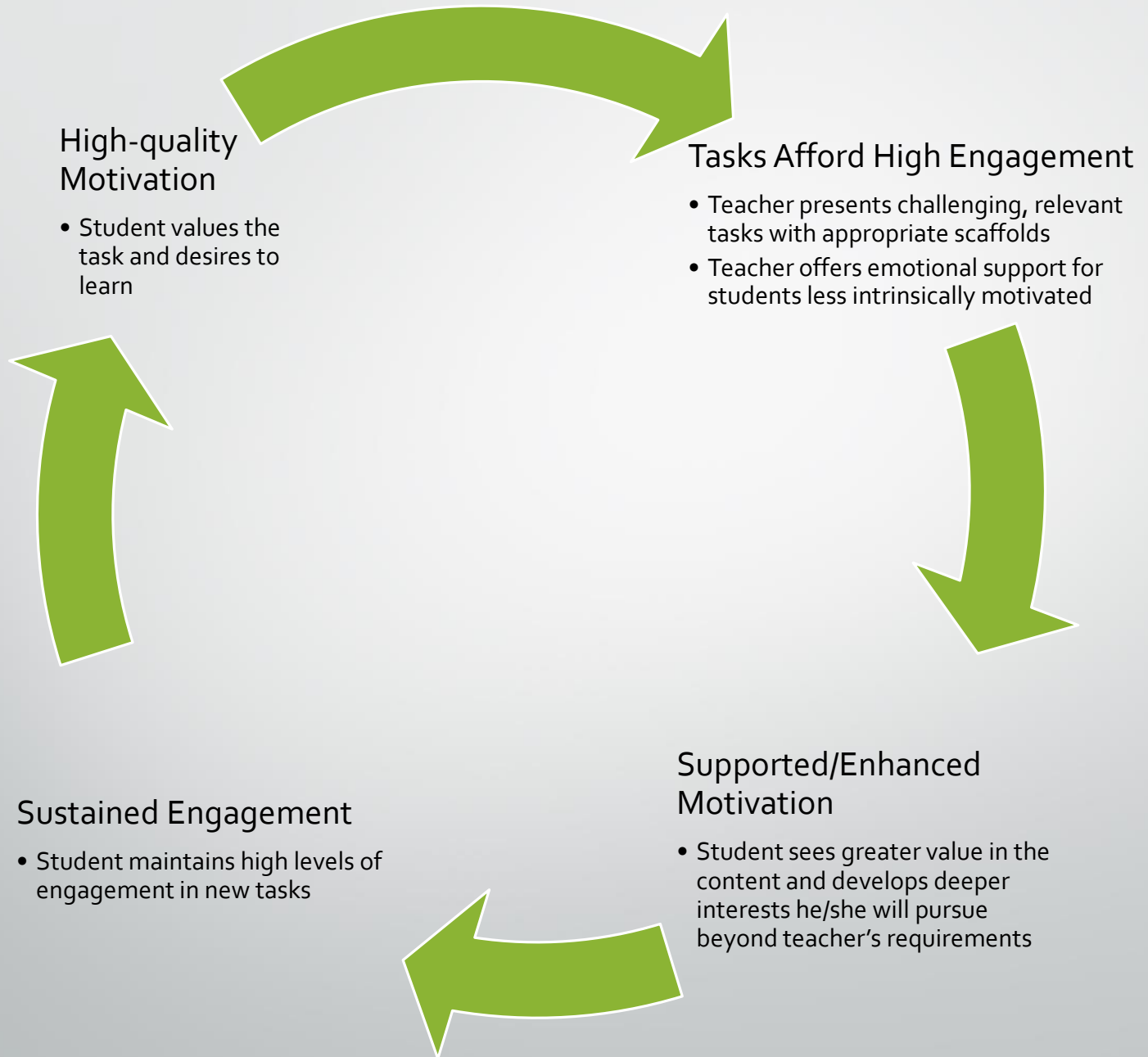
What's the Difference?

Motivation

- Defined by the individual's goals or beliefs during learning
- Only observed indirectly
- May or may not lead to engagement
- Discussed in terms of *quality*
- Students always have it, no matter what the task
- Helps but doesn't guarantee achievement outcomes

Engagement

- Defined by appropriateness of actions taken during learning
- Observable by others
- Can sometimes occur in the absence of high-quality motivation
- Discussed in terms of levels or *quantity*
- Students may not exhibit it on a task
- Necessary condition for achievement outcomes





- Student is intrinsically motivated to do biology
- Teacher offers low-level memorization-based tasks that are uninteresting
- Student's intrinsic motivation is poorly supported
- Student is behaviorally engaged, but no scaffolds for cognitive engagement
- Student sees less value in course/student does work only for the grade
- Student doesn't engage at high levels

Motivation at UT Tyler

- Large number of transfer students, first-generation students, and underrepresented ethnic minority students (See [here](#) regarding students' financial situations)
- Students take heavy course load
- Students often have child-care or elder-care responsibilities, often are married (See [here](#) regarding students who are parents)
- Students also often come from abroad

How can we meet our students where they are and promote academic success?

Improve Engagement by Meeting Basic Needs

Teacher Offers...

Autonomy Support

Scaffolds for
Motivation and SRL

Involvement and
Investment

Which fulfills...

Need for Autonomy

Need for
Competence

Need for
Relatedness

Which leads to...

Engagement

- Behavioral
- Cognitive
- Emotional



Engagement-Draining Motivational Deficits

- Goals of schooling guide students toward learning but also offer threat of failure:
 - Fear of evaluation (competence, autonomy)
 - Self-worth concerns (competence, belonging)
 - Desire to self-present (competence, belonging)
- Beliefs about intelligence may conflict with what is necessary for high achievement
 - Strategic effort withdrawal
 - Mindsets – growth vs. fixed (See work by Carol Dweck)
- Need to support students in dealing with these motivational challenges

Practices for Autonomy-Supportive Teaching

1. Acknowledging students' ideas and contributions
2. Open-ended tasks
3. Supporting students' ownership of ideas
4. Students' are involved in planning, making choices, and decision making regarding how to accomplish a task or go about a lesson
5. Active listening by the teacher
6. Asking what students want
7. Use non-controlling language
8. Give students adequate time for self-pacing and self-regulation
9. Being understanding of students' expressions of negative affect

Meeting the Need for Competence: Scaffold Learners' Successes



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Predevelopment:
Scaffolds Aren't
Enough

ZPD: Scaffolds Allow
Success

Actual
Development:
Scaffolds Faded,
Allow Success

Relationships Matter

- Positive, supportive relationships are more important in adolescence and emerging adulthood than in earlier stages of life
 - Social and emotional needs take precedence because this is a period of identity exploration and development
 - Some argue that adolescence is a *sensitive period* for social cognitive processes
 - Adolescents are uniquely affected by social isolation
 - Peer rejection, ostracism, and social exclusion are all linked to severe adverse outcomes for adolescents
- *Gentle discipline for committed compliance* is key to sustaining communication
 - Explain why behaviors are good or bad
 - Avoid punishment
 - Reinforce desirable behaviors first and foremost

Achievement Goals: Why Am I Doing My Schoolwork?

	Purpose	
	Mastery	Performance
Approach Success	Mastery-Approach "I want to learn as much as possible", "I want to master this skill"	Performance-Approach "I want to outdo my classmates", "I want to look smart"
Avoid Failure	<i>Mastery-Avoidance</i>	Performance-Avoidance "I want to do better than the worst person", "I want to avoid looking stupid"

Achievement Goals - Outcomes

Mastery Goals

- Primarily beneficial
- Support interest, self-efficacy, emotional well-being, and cognitive engagement
- Associated with cognitive engagement and deep processing
- Also associated with achievement when tasks are challenging, in face of negative feedback, and “mastery” isn’t vaguely defined

Performance Goals

- Mixed or negative results when using more modern, student-centered pedagogy
- Outcomes that can be considered harmful in the long-term:
 1. Decreased achievement after failure, setback, or challenge
 2. Unwillingness to work with others, particularly when others are perceived as “different”
 3. Social comparison
 4. Perception of low effort as “relieving” or pride-worthy
 5. Related to “shallow” but not “deep” processing or meta-cognitive strategies
 6. Avoiding asking for help and perception of peers and teachers as threats

Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Motivation: Emerging Adults Need Ownership of Ideas

	<i>Non self-determined</i>					<i>Self-determined</i>
	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Regulatory style:	Non-Regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Source of motivation:	Impersonal	External	Somewhat external	Somewhat internal	Internal	Internal
Motivation regulators:	No intention Incompetence Lack of control	Compliance External rewards or punishments	Ego-involvement Approval from others	Valuing an activity Endorsement of goals	Congruence Synthesis with self	Interest Enjoyment Inherent satisfaction

The Self-Determination Continuum

Using Extrinsic Motivators Effectively

- Use to control behavior:
 - “If you do X, you’ll get Y.”
 - Increases compliance
 - Reward comes at a motivational cost
- Use to inform competence:
 - “Good job, you’re making progress...”
 - Supports students’ engagement without cueing hidden costs of rewards
 - Nurture students’ inner need for competence

TARGET Framework for Improving Student Motivation

- **Task** - moderately challenging, meaningful, authentic
- **Autonomy** – support autonomy
- **Recognition** – all students get opportunity to be recognized for progress
- **Grouping** – students work together
- **Evaluation** – students get revision opportunities and multiple ways to be evaluated; learn from mistakes
- **Time** – students are given adequate time for learning

Problem #1

- **Is this professor's comment good for motivation?**

"Yesterday, we talked about how to write descriptive essays. We went through an example of how to do this, together, in class. Today, you're going to try it on your own. On page 45 of your textbook, you'll find pictures of 5 people. You can pick any of them to describe. Show me how good you are at writing by writing a description of one of those people. Remember, this is a major graded assignment, so you'll want to do your best on this. For a lot of you, getting an A or a B on this assignment would make a big difference in your grades, and keep you from getting a low grade in this class."

Problem #2

Pete is a student in a your class who seems totally uninterested in class. He never hands in his homework or pays attention. You talk to him after class to try to figure out the source of his undesirable motivation pattern.

- **Prepare a total of 4 questions for Pete, his teacher, and parents that clarify the causes of Pete's motivational problems**
 1. Go beyond face value and avoid social desirability issues
 2. Use language the student can understand (e.g. offer concrete examples)

Problem #3

- Develop a set of four different assessments you could use in a future classroom to support students' motivation. Be specific as to what the assignments are and how they will be evaluated.